

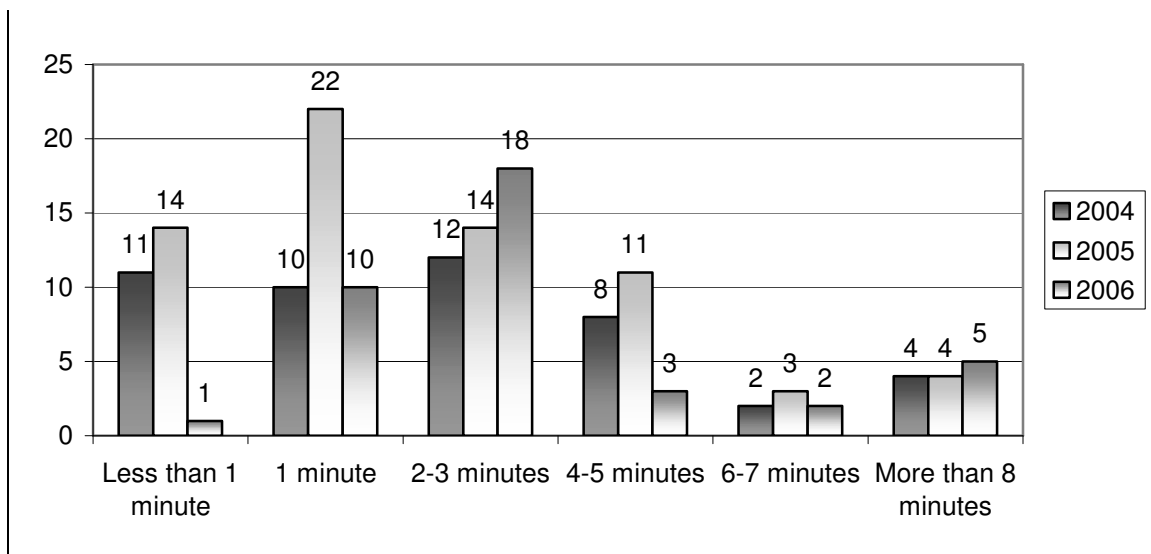


SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT SPECIAL REPORT

Documentation of Vehicle Pursuits has increased dramatically in 2006 resulting in a definite trend towards increased reporting even when the incident did not meet the criteria of Pursuit¹ as outlined in SPD Manual section 1.141. The total number of reports that were received in 2006 was 85. Of those, 46 were classified as "Failure to Yield"² rather than pursuits. In addition to the classic pursuit, incidents that resulted in the suspect vehicle pulling over shortly after the pursuit begins, or where a supervisor terminates the pursuit are still being classified as "pursuits".

Duration

In 2006 there were 39 Vehicle Pursuits. Those reports showed that 1 (2.5%) lasted less than one minute, 10 (25.6%) lasted 1 minute, 18 (46.1%) of pursuits lasted between 2-3 minutes, 3 (7.6%) lasted 4-5 minutes, 2 (5.1%) lasted 6-7 minutes and 5 (12.8%) lasted 8 minutes or more. It is important to note that only 10 pursuits lasted 4 minutes or more. The chart below contrasts the 2006 statistics with those from the two previous years.



DISTANCE

The pursuit distance ranged from 0-1 mile up to 5+ miles. Because Seattle is an urban environment that is densely populated it is not surprising that the majority of the pursuits covered the distance of 1 mile or less (20). This is in keeping with

¹ According to SPD policy a pursuit exists when "an officer initiates a vehicle stop and the driver resists the order to stop, increases speed and/or takes evasive actions, and/or refuses to stop. It is the policy of the Department that pursuits are permissible only when the need for immediate capture outweighs the danger created by the pursuit itself."

² Failure to Yield is defined by the driver taking no evasive action such as running red lights or exceeding the posted speed limit to elude the officer, rather they just do not stop. The Officer disengages and typically articulates in the report that the risk associated with the pursuit outweighed the benefit of the pursuit.



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the nationwide findings that most pursuits are very short in distance. 14 pursuits in 2006 covered the distance of 1-3 miles, 3 covered 3-5 miles and 2 covered 5+ miles.

TIME OF DAY AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

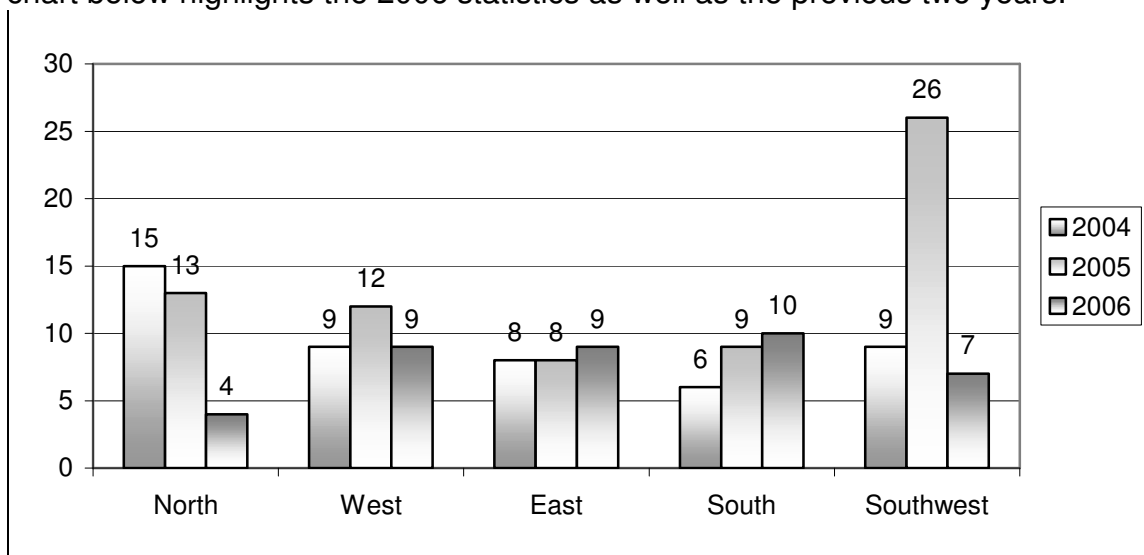
Pursuits during darkness accounted for 27 (69.2%) of the total pursuits. 9 (23%) occurred during daylight and 3 (7.6%) occurred at dusk. Road conditions showed that 29 (74.3%) of the pursuits occurred when the roads were dry, and 10 (25.6%) occurred when they were wet. In 34 (87.1%) of the pursuits traffic conditions were light, and in 5 (12.8%) traffic conditions were medium. The weather conditions correlated to the road conditions with 30 (76.9%) occurring in dry weather and 9 (23%) occurring when the weather was wet. This is consistent with the policy that requires officers to consider a number of factors in addition to seriousness of the crime before initiating a pursuit. Among those are; road and weather conditions, volume of car and foot traffic, visibility, location, capability of police equipment, the officer's own driving ability, and the officer's familiarity with the area

DAY OF THE WEEK

Pursuits occurred fairly evenly over the week. 4 (10.2%) occurred on Sunday, 6 (15.3%) occurred on both Monday and Tuesday, 7 (17.9%) occurred on Wednesday, 8 (20.5%) occurred on Thursday, 5 (12.8%) occurred on Friday and 3 (7.6%) occurred on Saturday.

LOCATION

When we look at the distribution across the five precincts, there is a fairly even split between three of the Precincts. The South Precinct reported 10 (25%) of the pursuits, while both the East and West precinct reported 9 (23%). The North Precinct reported 4 (10%) and Southwest reported 7 (17%) of the pursuits. The chart below highlights the 2006 statistics as well as the previous two years.

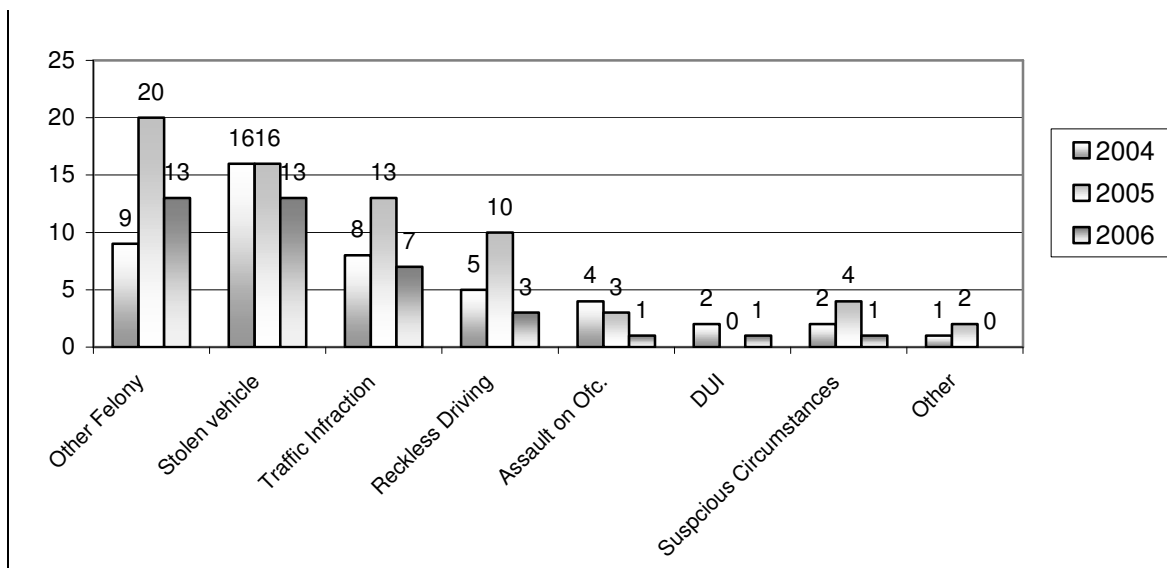




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REASONS

The two most common reasons cited for the reason for the pursuits were: the fleeing vehicle was reported as stolen or the suspect driving the vehicle was wanted for another felony, both accounting for 13 (33.3) of the pursuits. Traffic violations accounted for 10 (25.6%) of the pursuits, suspicious activity, driving under the influence, and assault on an officer each accounted for 1 (2.5%) of the total. The chart below highlights the statistics for 2006 and the two previous years.



In 2006 Seattle Police Officers made over 62,901 traffic stops. The 39 pursuits account for .062% of the total traffic stops (62,901 made by SPD).

Officers made the determination to terminate the pursuit in 6 (15.3%) of the incidents. Supervisors terminated 12 (30.6%) of the pursuits, 11 (28.2%) were ended when the suspect stopped on his/her own and 6 (15.3%) ended with a suspect collision. In 10.2% of the reports, no information was provided as to who ended the pursuit. The Seattle Police Foundation and the State awarded a grant to the department to purchase "spike strips", which were deployed in all patrol vehicles. Spike strips are designed to slowly deflate the vehicle tires. In 2006, spike strips were used 6 times. In four of those instances, the spike strip was deployed successfully, in the two other, the vehicles managed to avoid hitting them.

28 (71.7%) of the pursuits ended without any sort of collision and in 11 (28.2%) some type of collision occurred during the course of the pursuit. Of those 11, only 3 resulted in injury (all of which were minor). In 84.6% (33) of pursuits there



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was no injury sustained in the course of the pursuit, only 15.3% (6) listed any type of injury, 3 were the minor injuries noted above and in the other 3, two involved injuries that officers sustained during the subsequent arrest and one involved a passenger who attempted to jump out of the moving vehicle when they driver slowed to abandon the car.

Three (3) (7.6%) of the pursuits were determined to be out of policy. All three were deemed by supervisors to fall outside the acceptable guidelines established for initiating a pursuit. Those found to be out of policy were immediately addressed through the officer's chain of command and additional training was provided to those involved. None of the out of policy pursuits resulted in collisions or injury.

Mandatory Pursuit reports are reviewed by the officer's chain of command, all the way through the Bureau Commander. The reports are collated and tracked for trend analysis and policy or training revisions. The pursuit policy is a restrictive policy and has been in place since 2004.

CONCLUSION

SPD has significantly reduced the number of pursuits with its restrictive policy and mandatory reporting. Pursuits are a tiny fraction of all traffic stops. Training and adherence to the policy by officers, constant attention to this issue by supervisors and formal review of each incident are credited with keeping the number of pursuits to the minimum necessary, while still ensuring that the department has the means and equipment to apprehend criminals.